

¶ Quod Pandarus: Thou wretched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke upon thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte;
But byd, and lat me go biforn a lyte.
¶ And with that word he gan undo a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.

The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here;
And they that layen at the dore withoute,
ful sykerly they slepten alle yfere;
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon withouten lette,
Theras they laye, and softlyt it shette.

And as he com ayeinward prively,
His nece awook, and asked: Who goth there?
¶ My dere nece, quod he, it am I;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;
¶ And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere:
No word, for love of God I yow biseche;
Lat no wight ryse and heren of our speche.

¶ What! which wey be ye comen, benedicite?
Quod she, and how thus unwist of hem alle?
¶ Here at this secre trappe/dore, quod he.
¶ Quod tho Criseyde: Lat me som wight calle.
¶ Ey! God forbode that it sholde falle,
Quod Pandarus, that ye swich foly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne;
Your wommen slepen alle, I undertake,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;
And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende.

Now nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,
Quod he, so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir Leef and Dere herte calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle,
Imene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hirself a shame, and him a gyle.

Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot yourself, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthiest knight,
Oon of this world, and therto trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyl ye liven sholde.

Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente,
Into my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of myself, as wisly have I joye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle into wodnesse,
But if God helpe; and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
for sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.

¶ Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde:
¶ Allas! I wende, whoso tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! allas! conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe!

¶ Horaste! allas! and falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, God helpe me so, quod she;
¶ Allas! what wikked spirit tolde him thus?
Now certes, eem, tomorwe, and I him see,
I shal therof as ful excusen me
As ever dide womman, if him lyke;
¶ And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

¶ O God! quod she, so worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicie,
Ymedled is with many a bitteresse!
ful anguisshous than is, God woot, quod she,
Condicoun of veyn prosperitee;
for either joyes comen nought yfere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

O brotel wele of mannes joye unstable!
With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Either he woot that thou, joye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye;
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray joye and selinesse,
That is of ignorance ay in derknesse?

Now if he woot that joye is transitorie,
As every joye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he
May in no parfyt selinesse be.
And if to lese his joye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that joye is worth ful lyte.

¶ Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
But O, thou wikked serpent jalouseye,
Thou misbelevd and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agiltu him, that I wiste?

¶ Quod Pandarus: Thus fallen is this cas.
¶ Why, uncle myn, quod she, who tolde him this?
¶ Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?
¶ Ye woot, ye nece myn, quod he, what is;
I hope al shal be wel that is amis,
for ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.

¶ So shal I do tomorwe, ywis, quod she,
And God toform, so that it shal suffyse.
¶ Tomorwe? allas, that were a fayr, quod he,
Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
for, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in ydrawe;
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.

Nece, alle thing hath tyme, I dar avowe;
for whan a chaumbre afyr is, or an halle,
¶ Met more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
How is this candeale in the straw yfalle?
¶ A benedicite! for al among that fare
The harm is doon, and farewell feldefare!

And, nece myn, ne take it not agreef,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two;
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in jupartye.

¶ Hadde I him never leef? By God, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef, quod she.
¶ Now by my thrift, quod he, that shal be sene;
for, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
for al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde God, I never mote have joye!

Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in jupartye
for thing of nought! Now, by that God above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.
¶ What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentillesse!

¶ Quod tho Criseyde: Wole ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese;
have here, and bereth him this blew ring,
for ther is nothing mighte him bettre plesse,
Save I myself, ne more his herte apese;
And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
is causeles, that shal be seen tomorwe.

¶ A ring? quod he, ye, hasel wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken;
And swich a ring, trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;
That fele I now, quod he, and that is routhe;
O tyme ylost, wel maystow cursen slouth!

¶ Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?
But if a fool were in a jalous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte
Another day, whan that I mighte him finde:
But this thing stont al in another kinde.

This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke;
for trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no jalouse wordes speke.
And forthy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So speke yourself to him of this matere;
for with o word ye may his herte stere.

Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist to every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon ne sinne;
I wol myself be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight,
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.

¶ This accident so pitous was to here,
And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere,
His prive coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
Considered alle things as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

¶ Cryseyde answerde: As wisly God at reste
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!
And eem, ywis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
If that I hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til God me bettre minde sende,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.

¶ Quod Pandarus: Ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is fleminge of wrecches;
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
for verray slouth or othere wilful tecches;
This seyde by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on bonde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.

¶ Thanne, eem, quod she, doth herof as yow list;
But er he come I wil up first aryse;
And, for the love of God, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
So wirceth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
for I am here al in your governaunce.

¶ That is wel seyde, quod he, my nece dere,
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;
And ech of yow ese othere sorwes smerte,
for love of God; and, Venus, I thee herie;
for sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.

¶ This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
ful sobrelly, right by hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette;
But Lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word aright outbringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.